

CITY OF SAN JOSÉ, CALIFORNIA
Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
801 North First Street, Room 400
San José, California 95110-1795

Hearing Date/Agenda Number
P.C. 3/27/02 Item: 4.e.

File Number
PDC 01-03-046

Application Type
Planned Development Rezoning

Council District
3

Planning Area
Central

Assessor's Parcel Number(s)
467-19-073

STAFF REPORT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Completed by: Akoni Danielsen

Location: Northeast corner of North 5th and East Santa Clara Streets (24 North 5th Street)

Gross Acreage: 0.75

Net Acreage: 0.75

Net Density: N/A

Existing Zoning: R-M Residence, CG Commercial

Existing Use: church, vacant

Proposed Zoning: A(PD) Planned
Development

Proposed Use: Mixed use project consisting of a 31,738 sq.ft. church/community center, a 7,263 sq.ft. child day care center, 93,680 sq.ft. of office space, and 9,471 sq.ft. of retail space

GENERAL PLAN

Completed by: AD

Land Use/Transportation Diagram Designation
Public/Quasi-Public

Project Conformance:
☒ Yes ☐ No
☒ See Analysis and Recommendations

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

Completed by: AD

North: Residential

R-M Residence

East: Commercial, Residential

A(PD) Planned Development

South: Vacant (planned City Hall)

CG Commercial

West: Vacant (planned Symphony)

CG Commercial, R-M Residence

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Completed by: AD

☐ Environmental Impact Report certified
☐ Negative Declaration circulated on
☒ Negative Declaration adopted on March 4, 2002

☐ Exempt
☐ Environmental Review Incomplete

FILE HISTORY

Completed by: AD

Annexation Title: Original City

Date: March 27, 1850

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION

☒ Approval
☐ Approval with Conditions
☐ Denial

Date: _____

Approved by: _____
☐ Action
☒ Recommendation

APPLICANT/OWNER

Reverend Jim Crawford
First United Methodist Church of San Jose
24 North Fifth Street
San Jose, CA 95112

PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED

Completed by: AD

Department of Public Works

See attached memo

Other Departments and Agencies

See attached memos from Fire Department, Police Department, and Environmental Services Department.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

None received

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BACKGROUND

The First United Methodist Church is proposing a Planned Development Rezoning from CG Commercial and R-M Residence to A(PD) Planned Development Zoning District to allow a mixed use project consisting of a 31,738 sq.ft. church/community center, a 7,263 sq.ft. child day care center, 93,680 sq.ft. of office space, and 9,471 sq.ft of retail space on a 0.75 gross acre site. The existing church will be demolished and replaced with new mixed-use construction of 12 stories not to exceed 182 feet above ground level.

The 12-story office tower component of the project is placed at the corner of East Santa Clara and North Fifth Streets, while the lower (roughly 55 ft. tall) church component is placed to the north, fronting on North Fifth Street. The church would include an 800-seat sanctuary, a large multi-purpose room/gymnasium, and several smaller classroom spaces, and an open playground/courtyard on the roof. The ground-floor of the office tower features a large atrium with lobby entrance at the street corner, and several commercial tenant spaces facing East Santa Clara Street. Parking is provided in two levels beneath the new mixed-use structure and on adjacent property owned by the church.

The original church structure was destroyed in a fire in 1991, and for the past decade the church has used a smaller related building on site that survived the fire. The subject site is surrounded by residential uses to the north and east, and the planned City Hall Complex to the south across East Santa Clara Street and the planned Symphony Auditorium to the west across North Fifth Street. The site is located in the Downtown Frame along the East Santa Clara Neighborhood Business District, a block east of the Downtown Core.

The project fronts onto the Santa Clara/Alum Rock Transit-Oriented Development Corridor. The corridor includes a planned light rail line and has been identified as a potential alignment for the planned Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) extension from Fremont to Downtown San Jose. The site would be roughly ¼ mile to the east of the planned Downtown BART station. This corridor links a portion of eastern San Jose to Downtown and central San Jose. As Downtown continues to redevelop and intensify, this corridor is experiencing greater demand for intensification and provides opportunities to reuse older commercial and residential sites, with the subject project a prime example.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

An Initial Study was prepared for this project and a Mitigated Negative Declaration was adopted by the Director of Planning on March 4, 2002 (see attached). Mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study have been incorporated into the project.

GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE

The project is consistent with the San Jose 2020 General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of Public/Quasi-Public. This category is used to designate public land uses, including schools, colleges, corporation yards, homeless shelters, libraries, fire stations, water treatment facilities, convention centers and auditoriums, museums, governmental offices and airports. Institutions such as churches, private schools and private hospitals are also appropriate for this designation. The proposed church is considered a quasi-public use, while the proposed office use can be considered complimentary to the proposed City Hall governmental offices planned across East Santa Clara Street.

In 2001, the City Council approved a General Plan Text Amendment addressing maximum building height at the subject site and surrounding Civic Center Complex. The maximum building height is now defined by the airspace requirements of the San Jose International Airport, bringing this emerging redevelopment area in line with the existing requirements of the Downtown Core a block to the west.

ANALYSIS

The primary project issues include the project's compatibility with the planned Civic Center Project, conformance with the Commercial Design Guidelines, and the Church Location Policy.

Compatibility with Civic Center Project. The site is currently developed with a two-story church structure and a vacant lot. The site is adjacent to the historic Vintage Towers (approximately 160 feet tall), the most prominent current visual element along this section of East Santa Clara Street. The area is very eclectic in terms of architecture, age of the structures, and uses. In addition to the 12-story Vintage Towers, existing structure heights in the vicinity range from one and two story residences to larger three to five story multi-family developments and to multi-story educational buildings of the San Jose State University campus.

The near-term development of the Civic Center project, including construction of the new San Jose City Hall (approximately 270 feet tall) to the south and the Symphony Hall (approximately 200 feet tall) to the west, will substantially change the area's visual character. The proposed church/office structure will reach approximately 180 feet in height and has received a Determination of No Hazard to Air Navigation from the FAA. The proposed structure height will be in keeping with existing (Vintage Towers) and planned structure heights (City Hall and Symphony Hall) in the immediate vicinity. The church/office structure will cast shadows on surrounding properties, but will not cast shadows onto the Horace Mann playground, the lone nearby public open space. The project, being located to the north across Santa Clara Street, will not cast shadows on the planned Civic Center plaza facing Santa Clara Street.

The proposed uses will be complementary with the Civic Center Complex. The church sanctuary and gymnasium are intended to provide meeting space for numerous community groups and functions. The child day care center will provide a much-needed service for Civic Center workers and the general public. The office space will be a convenient location for frequent, regular customers of City Hall services. The

ground-floor retail space on Santa Clara Street will contribute to the existing Neighborhood Business District, providing additional opportunities for Civic Center workers, visitors, and the general public.

The church proposes to provide project parking per the standards of the Downtown Parking Management Zone, with commercial uses needing 1.5 spaces for each 1,000 sq.ft. of net floor space and the church needing one space per four seats used for worship. The parking zone currently extends to the west side of Fourth Street, a block to the west of the site. At these downtown rates, the church would need approximately 200 stalls, while the office use would need approximately 120 stalls. Two hundred and forty nine parking spaces will be provided, 150 underground on-site and 99 on adjacent surface lots owned by the church.

The complimentary schedules of the church and the office use provide an opportunity for efficiency through alternating use of the site's planned parking. The proposed church and office uses are also anticipated to benefit from the numerous existing and planned transit opportunities and public parking facilities within short walking distance. For these reasons, staff believes application of the downtown standards is appropriate even though the site is a block to the east of the adopted limits of the parking zone. The site's location adjacent to Downtown, the planned Civic Center Complex, and transit, and the project's mixture of complementary uses make application of the standard parking requirements applicable throughout the more suburban areas of San Jose unnecessary.

Commercial Design Guidelines Conformance. Staff believes the project conforms to the relevant standards for office development over three stories. The architecture has been coordinated to complement the surrounding planned Civic Center complex structures. Apparent height and bulk have been reduced by dividing the building mass into smaller scale components. The office building design features the three traditional parts of a taller building: a well-defined base, midsection, and top.

Along street frontages, Santa Clara and 5th Streets, the project features a strong pedestrian orientation, with wide sidewalks, frequent building entries, and groundfloor retail and the church directly accessible from the sidewalk. Building setbacks are minimal in keeping with the surrounding urban pattern. Parking is placed within the project, shielded by the groundfloor retail space, the church use, or the building facade.

Church Location Policy. Staff believes the Policy (attached), in many respects, is not particularly relevant to consideration of the proposed project for several reasons. There has been an existing church on the site for decades. The Policy primarily addresses potential impacts to residential living environments, yet the area surrounding the church is transforming to a major civic/public redevelopment node adjacent to Downtown. Staff sees no need to apply the suburban 25-foot perimeter setbacks called for by the Policy. The relevant Policy issues relate to parking and the ability to accommodate additional future church growth. Staff considers parking adequate, assuming expected transit use, alternating use of on-site parking with the office use, and the availability of parking on adjacent property owned by the church. The proposed new structure is large enough to allow for the for-seeable future growth of the church.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A public hearing notice for the project was published in a local newspaper and mailed to all property owners and tenants within 1000 feet of the subject site. The applicant has held several community meetings, with the most recent occurring February 21, 2002.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval and the City Council adopt an ordinance rezoning the subject site for the following reasons:

1. The proposed rezoning conforms to the subject site's General Plan Land Use Diagram Designation of Public/Quasi-Public.
2. The proposed project will further the goals and policies of the Civic Center Plaza Redevelopment Plan.
3. The proposed rezoning will allow intensification consistent with the General Plan's Transit-Oriented Development Corridor strategy.
4. The proposed project conforms to the applicable Commercial Design Guidelines.
5. The proposed church use conforms to the relevant criteria of the Church Location Policy.

C: Charles Olson, Sanger and Olson, One Embarcadero Center, 12th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94111-3617
George Miers, 1150 Moraga Way, Ste 150, Moraga, CA 94556